

Message Text

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PAGE 01 USUN N 05138 100245Z

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ACTION IO-13

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SUBJ: 31ST UNGA: AGENDA ITEM 61 - THE REPORT OF THE
WORLD FOOD COUNCIL

1. SUMMARY: GENERAL DEBATE ON ITEM 61, THE REPORT OF THE WORLD FOOD COUNCIL CONCLUDED ON NOVEMBER 8. THE TWENTY-FIVE SPEAKERS INCLUDED CANADA, NIGERIA, ITALY, IRAN, AND THE U. S. WITH SENATOR GEORGE MCGOVERN DELIVERING THE U. S. STATEMENT. WHILE WELCOMING THE INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT (IFAD), THE LDC'S CALLED FOR MORE PROGRESS ON ISSUES SUCH AS FORWARD PLANNING OF FOOD AID, CREATION OF EMERGENCY FOOD RESERVES, AND GREATER AID TO INCREASE LDC FERTILIZER OUTPUT. ITALY AND IRAN INVITED IFAD TO ESTABLISH ITS HEADQUARTERS IN THEIR COUNTRIES, AND CANADA NOMINATED, GERRY VOGEL, HEAD OF THE CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD, TO BE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE WORLD FOOD PROGRAM (WFP). END SUMMARY.

2. SENATOR GEORGE MCGOVERN DELIVERED THE U. S. STATEMENT TO A LARGE AND ATTENTIVE AUDIENCE. (COPIES BEING POUCHED UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 02 USUN N 05138 100245Z

TO BYRNES, IO/AGR, AND EMBASSY ROME.) ALMOST ALL

SPEAKERS WELCOMED THE CREATION OF IFAD AND HOPED IT WOULD SOON BE MADE OPERATIONAL. ITALIAN AMBASSADOR TO THE UN, PIERO VINCI, AND THE IRANIAN DELEGATE BOTH INVITED IFAD TO ESTABLISH ITS HEADQUARTERS IN THEIR COUNTRIES. NIGERIA CONDEMNED "MUTED ATTEMPTS TO COERCE" OPEC COUNTRIES TO CONTRIBUTE MORE TO THE FUND. ALGERIA ALSO DEFENDED OPEC CONTRIBUTIONS TO IFAD.

3. COMMON THEMES IN LDC STATEMENTS WERE A CALL FOR THE GENERAL ACCEPTANCE OF THE CONCEPT OF FORWARD PLANNING IN FOOD AID PROGRAMS, THE ESTABLISHMENT OF EMERGENCY FOOD RESERVES, AND THE NEED FOR GREATER AID TO INCREASE LDC FERTILIZER OUTPUT. WHILE ALL AGREED THAT THE LONG-TERM SOLUTION TO FOOD PROBLEMS WAS INCREASED FOOD PRODUCTION IN THE LDC'S, THEY MAINTAINED THAT INTERNAL RESOURCES WERE INSUFFICIENT TO PROVIDE THE CAPITAL NECESSARY. SEVERAL POINTED TO DETERIORATING BALANCE OF PAYMENTS DIFFICULTIES AS A MAJOR CONSTRAINT ON INCREASED FOOD PRODUCTION.

4. THREE COUNTRIES, INCLUDING NIGERIA, ENDORSED THE CONCEPT OF FOOD PRIORITY COUNTRIES; TUNISIA OPPOSED THE NEW CATEGORY, WHILE ALGERIA AND SUDAN WANTED TO INCLUDE IN THAT CATEGORY COUNTRIES IN THE POSITION TO RAPIDLY INCREASE THEIR FOOD PRODUCTION. IRAQ, NIGERIA, AND URUGUAY ASKED THE COMMITTEE TO CONSIDER THE G-77 RESOLUTIONS SUBMITTED AT THE SECOND MEETING OF THE WFC. ZAMBIA RAISED THE QUESTION OF FOOD AID TO LIBERATION MOVEMENTS AND REFUGEES IN SOUTHERN AFRICA. THE ZAMBIAN DELEGATE THOUGHT THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (ECOSOC) SHOULD BE INVITED TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE FOR THESE PEOPLE.

5. THE CANADIAN DELEGATE SUGGESTED THAT THE WFC CONCENTRATE ITS ENERGIES ON THE EXAMINATION IN DEPTH OF ONE OR TWO KEY ISSUES EACH YEAR PERTAINING TO THE FUNDAMENTAL NEED TO INCREASE FOOD PRODUCTION. THIS WOULD REPLACE THE CURRENT "STERILE EXCHANGE OF SET-PIECE SPEECHES" ATTEMPTING TO COVER THE WHOLE RANGE OF FOOD PROBLEMS. CLAIMING TO BE THE LARGEST SINGLE CONTRIBUTOR TO THE WORLD FOOD PROGRAM (WFP), THE CANADIANS PROPOSED THAT MR. GERRY VOGEL BE NAMED UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 03 USUN N 05138 100245Z

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE WFP. VOGEL IS CURRENTLY CHAIRMAN OF THE CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD. (COPIES OF THE CANADIAN STATEMENT BEING POUCHED TO BYRNES, IO/AGR, AND EMBASSY ROME.)

6. EGYPT SUPPORTED THE FULL FINANCING OF WFC STAFF FROM THE REGULAR UN BUDGET. IRAQ HOPED TO SEE THE WFC, IN CONJUNCTION WITH UNCTAD, INITIATE A STUDY ON THE RELATIVE

PRICES OF LDC AGRICULTURAL EXPORTS VERSUS
INDUSTRIALIZED COUNTRIES' MANUFACTURED EXPORTS.

7. IN THE BANGLADESH STATEMENT, REFERENCE WAS MADE TO DROUGHT CONDITIONS AS A RESULT OF "UNILATERAL UPSTREAM DIVERSION" OF THE GANGES RIVER. INDIA IN A RIGHT OF REPLY RESPONDED TO THE "MISCONCEIVED ALLEGATIONS" AND SUGGESTED "OPTIMAL" USE BE MADE OF EXISTING WATER RESOURCES.

8. IN A STATEMENT AT THE END OF THE DEBATE, DR. JOHN HANNAH, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE WFC, URGED MINISTERIAL REPRESENTATION AT NEXT YEAR'S WFC MEETING, PROBABLY TO BE HELD IN THE PHILIPPINES. MAKING A STRONG PITCH FOR THE FINANCING OF WFC STAFF FROM THE UN BUDGET, HE CLAIMED THE WFC HAS THE POTENTIAL TO SOLVE IMPORTANT WORLD FOOD PROBLEMS, BUT SO FAR IT HAS "ONLY SCRATCHED THE SURFACE."

9. ON NOVEMBER 9 THE SECOND COMMITTEE WILL BEGIN A COMBINED GENERAL DEBATE ON THREE ITEMS, 59, 68, AND 67. EIGHTY-NINE SPEAKERS ARE INSCRIBED, AND THE DEBATE IS EXPECTED TO CONTINUE THROUGH NOVEMBER 12.
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